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3400 Forest Pest Management March 16, 1982

La Wis Wis Campground Post-treatment Evaluation

Forest Supervisor, Gifford Pinchot NF

On March 10-11, Gregory M. Filip, Donald J. Goheen, and Craig L. Schmitt, Plant Pathologists from the Regional Office, visited the Packwood Ranger District, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Washington. Purpose of the visit was to examine hazard tree removal operations and other treatments prescribed in the La Wis Wis Campground Management Plan. They were accompanied by Jim Olsen, Developed Sites Specialist of the RO; Jim Pollack, Head of Landscape Management of the RO; and Susan Honcharski, District Recreation Forester.

Nearly all of the units in the Campground were visited to examine as many of the treatments as possible. At the time of the visit, about two-thirds of the Campground had been treated. In general, all of the treatments were performed satisfactorily, with relatively little damage to permanent structures and residual trees, especially considering the size of the trees that had been felled and the close spacing of the residual trees.

The pathologists were particularly interested in examining felled trees that had been marked as hazardous based on the presence of (1) five or more conks of the fungus *Fomes pini*, cause of red ring rot, (2) conks of *Polyporus schweinitzii*, cause of red-brown butt rot, or (3) laminated root rot, caused by *Phellinus weirii* (see La Wis Wis Campground Hazard Tree Marking, December 21, 1981).

Trees near the Guard House (Entry Unit) marked as having laminated root rot due to their proximity to confirmed infected trees in fact did have the disease. This was confirmed by presence of laminated-type decay with setal hyphae in the freshly-cut stumps. Existence of red-brown butt rot also was confirmed in felled trees, primarily in the Riverside Unit.

All of the trees marked as hazardous due to red ring rot had substantial amounts of decay (white speck), especially near conks, in some portion of the stem. Decay caused by *F. pini* is not as severe as that caused by other heart-rotting fungi in that it rarely produces hollow boles. Usually rings of sound wood alternate with rings of decay. However, our philosophy on hazard tree removal is to treat the most hazardous trees in any developed recreation site, recognizing the fact that <u>all</u> trees pose some degree of potential hazard. The *F. pini*-infected trees are much more hazardous than other trees, based upon the presence of stem decay.

Of particular interest to the District is the fate of two massive trees adjacent to the historic CCC structure now used as a community kitchen. These two Douglas-firs are extremely valuable since they are the focal point of a plaque dedicating the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. One of these trees has

a severe lean about 50°-60° away from the community kitchen. The lean has been accentuating. The other tree has several small conks of *F. pini* about 40 feet above the ground. This tree was climbed earlier, a core extracted with an increment borer, and found to have a sound wood rind thickness of about 4 inches. This technically does not meet the standards of sound wood thickness, at that stem diameter, needed to indicate a safe tree. If this tree were to fail at the conks, the community kitchen and adjacent parking lot would be within striking distance.

After reexamining the two specimen trees and carefully considering target value, tree failure potential, and very importantly in this situation, aesthetic value of the trees, we do not recommend felling either of the trees for the following reasons:

1. The leaning tree is technically termed a "recent leaner" since it has not curved back to a nearly vertical position and is continuing to lean even more, possibly due to broken or rotten roots. Even though such trees have a high potential to fail, the direction of the lean in this case is away from valuable targets. If the tree should fail, it would fall most probably in the direction of the lean, which is also in the direction of prevailing winds. In all likelihood failure, if it happened at all, would occur in winter when the Campground is closed.

2. The other tree in question has at least 4 inches of sound wood at the *F. pini* conks, the point of maximum decay. Knowing the decay characteristics of this fungus and observing felled trees in the Campground with similar conks, it is probable that layers of relatively sound wood are present within the decay column and thus may give strength to the trunk. We recommend that instead of felling, the tree be guyed with one or more cables at a point of at least 20 feet above the conks to prevent the top from striking the community kitchen or adjacent parking lot should the tree break (most probably at the conks). The cables should be secured to nearby large trees behind the tree in question. We further recommend that at least every 5 years, the tree be examined for brown butt rot and that the cables be examined for damage.

We also recommend removing the one or two large snags, created by felling other trees, that are within striking distance of units or permanent structures. Also, consider removing two small cedars (rotten base) and the one large leaning Douglas-fir, with three or more *F. pini* conks, that are adjacent to the community kitchen.

If FPM can be of further assistance to the District, please contact us.

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